



TRAVERSE CITY ELKS LODGE #323

Elks raise more than \$5K for Father Fred Foundation



The Traverse City Elks Lodge #323 is excited to announce their success in gathering two truckloads of food and goods as well as raising over \$5400.00 in monetary donations for the Father Fred Foundation this past Mother's Day weekend. The food drive was held in lieu of the cancellation of the Elks annual Mother's Day brunch that typically sees over 400 guests at the Lodge. The goal was to honor mom this Mother's Day by giving back.

The Traverse City Elks would like to thank the community for their tremendous outpouring of support in coming together in just two days to exceed expectations for this charitable cause. "Elks Care Elks Share"

Elks 323 Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/TCElks323/>
Elks 323 Website: <http://elkstc.com/>
Please contact the following if you have questions:

- Rich Gauthier (Exalted Ruler): 231-642-0207
 - Cindy Bates (Officer): 720-273-7393
 - Cheryl Woodring (Officer): 231-313-4272
- About Traverse City Elks Lodge #323: The Elks exists to inculcate the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity in its members. Members strive to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of fellow Elks; to quicken the spirit of

American patriotism; to recognize a belief in God; to cultivate good fellowship; to perpetuate The Elks as a fraternal organization, and to provide for the United States' government. The opportunities for participation include becoming an officer or Trustee, committee work on a variety of committees and enjoying the hospitality and camaraderie of the Lodge family and club facilities. <http://elkstc.com/>

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NEWS AND NOTES

Gaylord Lodge holds multiple events

On April 22, Lodge used part of our Gratitude Grant to sponsor a First Responders lunch during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lunch and snack items were delivered to front line staff at Otsego Memorial Hospital, EMS, Gaylord City Police, Otsego County Sheriff Dept and the Michigan State Police Post.

Lodge honored our veterans on Memorial Day weekend. Our ER Lawrence Howard and his wife Jeanie placed a wreath at the Veteran's Memorial in downtown Gaylord.

Red Cross held a blood drive inside our Lodge and we had 39 donors.

In March the Gaylord area, MI Lodge provided a February luncheon to 48 Veterans.

Net new members with online invites

Has your Lodge promoted the online Membership application for signing up new Members?

A current paid-up Member of the Order, using the Elks website, can forward a membership invitation to family and friends. Invitees can complete and submit the application online.

Lodge Secretaries will be notified of these applications via the "Alerts" screen of CLMS2, then can process the electronic version the same as a paper application. All data provided by the applicant will be imported into the Lodge's CLMS2 database with the simple click of a button.

What better way to gain a Member than by using technology to its fullest?

Lodge bulletins: USPS vs. E-mail

The Grand Secretary's Office has seen an increase in inquiries about e-mailing the Lodge bulletin to save the Lodge money. Per the following Statute and Opinions, yes, a Lodge can e-mail the bulletin to a Member. Consequently, a Lodge cannot mandate all Members will receive the bulletin electronically if a Member requests a paper copy via regular mail:

Section 1.115: "Notice: Except as otherwise directed by Executive Order, any notice required to be sent or mailed to all Members of the Lodge may be included in the Lodge Bulletin or sent electronically to any Member who has given written authorization to receive notices electronically. Notice which is required to be served upon a specific Member must be served personally, by United States Mail or by United States Mail, Certified, Return Receipt Requested as specifically provided."

Section 16.150 Opinion 03: "If a Lodge publishes any magazine, newspaper, bulletin or other periodical devoted to the interests of the Order, every Member of that Lodge is entitled to receive a copy of each such publication, whether by electronic delivery or by regular mail."

Section 16.150 Opinion 04: "The Lodge Bulletin may be sent electronically to any Member without written authorization from that Member, unless otherwise requested by the Member."

Port Huron blood drive results

The results for the Port Huron Elks Lodge #343 (17th Consecutive) Blood Drive occurred on MONDAY, June 8, 2020 appear below, another great event!

The Elks Blood Drive Committee would like to thank those you donated, the volunteers and Elks Staff for making this Blood Drive another success!

We also had four volunteers from the Fort Gratiot/Burchville Lions Club assist the Red Cross during this drive as well as our Lodge Membership.

The results of our 17th blood drive:

- 44 presented (arrived to donate)
- 38 pints collected (3 power reds = 5 pints)

- 3 deferred
- 37 pints was our goal to collect
- 102% of goal was attained

Once again, we had another great blood drive as all available donation appointment times were booked!

The 18th Consecutive Blood Drive is scheduled for TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020 from 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm AND The 19th Consecutive Blood Drive has been scheduled for MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2020 from 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm

Port Huron Elks Lodge #343 sponsorship has helped the Red Cross collect over 748 pints of blood since our 1st blood drive took place on Monday, January 7, 2013.

— Scott R. Harris, PER, and Jay Spencer, Regional Representative American Red Cross

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Elks Care - Elks Share

Get Published in the Michigan Elks News!



Send us your articles and pictures and show us what you're proud of at your Lodge!

E-mail address: meanewsletter@mielks.org. Articles and hard copy photos may also be mailed to Karen Cary, Advantage Printing, 68838 Broadus, Suite A, Sturgis MI 49091.

Deadlines for submissions: March 15 for April publication; June 15 for July publication; Sept. 15 for October publication; Dec. 15 for January publication

STATE OFFICER MESSAGES

**JERRY ALEXIE**

President

Better days are ahead

To say that this year has started in an unprecedented way is quite an understatement. All my preconceived notions of what to expect were turned upside down due to the COVID-19 disruption.

My wife, Stephanie and my three daughters, along with their families, were looking forward to heading up to Sault St. Marie, where I would be installed as the President of the Michigan Elks Association, alongside Jim Rowland as 1st Vice President and Dave Sladek as 2nd Vice President. I never envisioned that the Spring Convention would be canceled nor that I would be installed on a Zoom call in my basement next to my wife and our family watching from their respective homes. Nonetheless, I was President, something that I had been waiting for and excited about for the past 3 years. There was still the National

Convention in Baltimore where I was anxiously awaiting the proud moment where I would carry our Michigan flag across the stage. That privilege was also unfortunately taken away when canceled.

We had been on a stay at home order for months and we finally got word that it was okay to reopen at 50 percent. At this time, the riots and protests began. So here I am, the President of the Elks with nothing to do and nowhere to go. As unsettling as that sounds, there was a part of me that kept reminding myself -- things can only get better from here! Slowly and surely they have. This week, Stephanie and I have started our venture around the state to visit and deliver the Michigan Elks shirts, which would have been available at the convention. It is good to see both familiar faces and meet some new ones. I am hopeful

that the rest of the year will progress without a hitch.

I would like to thank Chuck Oatten and his wife Debb for a great year and awesome travel experiences. I have learned a lot from Chuck and will cherish the time spent together and memories made. Also, to Stan Chubinski and his wife Cheryl, we appreciate your vast wealth of knowledge and wisdom. There was never a time when a phone call wasn't returned, a text wasn't responded to or a question was left unanswered. To Jim and Joan Rowland, we are grateful for the help making the St. Louis National Convention one of the best. You two are always willing to lend a hand and it doesn't go unnoticed. Stephanie and I have gained lifelong friends in you all. We are looking forward to spending more time with Dave Sladek and his wife Pam. I'm

certain that our journey together this year will be a memorable one.

Congratulations and thank you to all the DVP's and DVC's who stepped up to make a difference. To all my State Chairmen, I know this will be a difficult year but we will come out it with a great sense of accomplishment. Remember to protect yourself and your members when reopening your Lodges. Please abide by the rules and regulations set up to keep everyone safe. With that being said, don't forget that membership is key!

Lastly, thank you to everyone that has helped me become the President of the Michigan Elks Association. I am humbled and grateful to hold such a high honor. Hope to see everyone in October at the State Convention in Kalamazoo.

Better days are ahead.

**JAMES ROWLAND**

1st Vice President

Situation we didn't see coming

Greetings, all. WOW! Didn't see that coming, who would have thought that we could close the world. But the business of Elksdom continued thru it all. First with e-mails, then conference calls, then zoom videos, and now finally face to face again.

While we were in lockdown the transfer of State Offices, District Offices, and Committee Chairs has occurred. Please check the State and District directories in the MEA website for all the details. On

that note, I want to thank now Past State President Chuck Oatten and First Lady Deb for a wonderful year as State President during very troubling times. The sea was not always smooth but the Captain held the course. Chuck was an inspiration to us all and we thank him for setting a great example for us to follow.

Joan and I want to congratulate Jerry Alexie on his appointment as State President.

We are eagerly awaiting our travels with him and First Lady Stephanie as we visit

various events and Lodges throughout the state.

We also want to welcome and congratulate Dave and Pam Sladek as the 2nd VP from Copper Country. We looking forward to our time together and receiving some of the UP influence.

As you read this the three of us have started our visitation to various parts of the state. Checking out newly reopened Lodges and attending Elk Events. It's going to be awesome.

I hope you enjoyed the National

Convention as much as we did. I want to thank the Ferndale Lodge for knocking it out of the park again helping out in the hospitality room. Just seeing if you were still reading. Please keep updated on National and State conventions on the State calendar and convention website. We are looking forward to the fall convention in Kalamazoo, to hit the restart button and fellowship with all of you again.

Until then, wash your hands and don't touch your face.

**DAVID SLADEK**

2nd Vice President

Working to earn your approval

As your newest member to the MEA hierarchy, I am humbled to be up in the pilot house with Admiral Jerry Alexie and First Mate James Rowland.

I will be at my best to earn your approval in the coming years.

We are starting this year in uncharted waters, with this COVID-9

business affecting all of our Lodges operating procedures and incomes.

Our State and National Conventions being cancelled, took some of the wind out of our sails.

But we are resilient, we compromise and we will prevail.

My wife, Pam, and I look forward to meeting many of you, our MEA members.

Along with Jerry and Stephanie, Jim and Joan we will be travelling the state, visiting you and your Lodges.

It will be quite a hike for us, from way up here in Calumet. (It's all downhill). But we will go as far south as needed.

Our hearts go out to the kids competing in the hoop shoot program. They put so much effort in and then not being able to go to the Regional and National competition was sad.

Copper Country 404 was sure to have another national champion.

Again, thank you for your confidence.

GRAND LODGE



ROBERT L. DUTSMAN

Grand Exalted Ruler

Elkdom shines during unprecedented times

This will be my final newsletter message as your Grand Exalted Ruler. Given the ongoing concerns for the health and safety of our Members, together with that of their families and friends, the Grand Lodge Session in Baltimore has been cancelled. It is unclear as of the time of this writing what alternative arrangements will be made. Whatever happens, I can assure you that some very good people have been working to develop contingency plans. History will remember these as extraordinary times in the history of our nation and the world. While many previously felt secure in the belief that the world's

problems were always in far off places and there was little for us as Americans to worry about, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed that. Who had heard of social/spatial distancing and the use of face masks in common areas? We've been experiencing some challenging times, but here as in all throughout our history, the Elks have stood tall and worked through problems. Through creative new means of handling the business in our Lodges and looking after each other as best we can, we have done well and can be proud of what we have accomplished together.

It has been deeply moving for both Beth and I to have had the opportunity to travel around our country and meet so many wonderful people, to make new friends, and to learn about the truly remarkable charitable works being done in so many ways. While our travel was cut a bit short (a dozen of our visits were canceled due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions), we saw that Elkdom is clearly shining bright, building on the work and traditions of those who have gone before and moving forward together toward a brighter future. That was the essence of my slogan, "Honoring the Past-Embracing the Future"

and it is ringing true in our Lodges and State Associations all across the nation. There is a lot to be proud of with Elkdom. This has indeed been the ride of a lifetime, and I take this final opportunity to thank you all for the warmth, caring, and hospitality shown to Beth and me along the way. Elks are a truly special breed of people, and worthy of the title Best People On Earth! By the way, don't forget that the Auditing and Accounting Committee is to be looking at the Lodge books and report at the last meeting of the month. Just doing my job. Best wishes to all, and may God bless.

DRUG AWARENESS

DAP introduces online training

By William J. Bryan
Assistant Director

Usually by this time we would be looking forward to the National Convention and a two-day training for State Chairs. Then along came COVID-19 and the world of Elkdom changed.

Although the mission of the Elks Drug Awareness Program has not changed, our delivery of the program certainly has. In place of our traditional two-day training and our very popular Open House Session at Grand Lodge, the directors of the DAP will be conducting smaller and shorter online interactive training via video conferencing.

We will offer four regionalized trainings, which will highlight many of our traditional programs and roll out our exciting online educational program for schools.

The training will not only showcase this new innovative program for teachers and schools, but

will educate State Chairs and directors alike in how to introduce this program to schools. The best part of this new aspect of the DAP is that it will be provided to them at no cost to the taxpayers.

This is also a challenging time for Exalted Rulers. As we struggle to re-open our Lodges and try to figure out how we can do so in a safe manner, ERs are going to be faced with issues never before experienced.

The Elks have always been in the forefront of problem solving. One way to eliminate stress around Drug Awareness is to appoint a Lodge Chair that is willing to roll up his or her sleeves and get to work. The first thing your Lodge Chair will want to do is contact the State Chairman (directory can be found at elks.org and go to Our Programs) and let them know they are on board.

We will get through this together. The key, as always, is communication.

Elks donate 17K hides for gloves, craft kits

By Mary K. Morgan
Commission Director

The Elks ensure that veterans everywhere have the support of the Order and a connection to the community. It may be hard to do that directly right now, but rest assured that the work of Elks volunteers throughout the past year is helping veterans right now.

A perfect example is the Veterans Leather Program, which had another stellar year in 2019-20.

This program brings Elks and community volunteers together to collect hides for veterans. The finished leather is then used for wheelchair gloves, craft kits, and recreation therapy programs.

This past year, Elks and volunteers in 12 states donated 17,234 hides to the Veterans Leather Program. Volunteers helped to collect these hides and

transport them to our partners, who turned them into leather.

That leather is turned into wheelchair gloves, and Elks across the country distributed 3,075 pairs of these gloves to veterans. In fact, every year Veterans Leather Program volunteers attend national adaptive sports events to meet with veterans personally and distribute these gloves.

Finished leather is also turned into craft kits, with a little help from our partner Help Heal Veterans (HHV). This year, Elks donated more than 83,870 square feet of leather to HHV to make craft kits for veterans. In return, HHV helped Elks volunteers in State Veterans Homes and elsewhere hand out 10,620 craft kits directly to veterans in their community. With so many activities canceled this year, these craft kits are more popular than

ever! Finished leather is also donated directly to VA Medical Centers, which recreational therapists use to plan creative projects focused on helping veterans recover.

Every year there's a competition to see which states can contribute the most hides. Missouri came out on top again this year, contributing 8,742 hides. Arkansas came in second place with 3,274 hides, with Iowa on their heels in third place at 2,927 hides. Congratulations to these states!

Thank you to all the Veterans Leather Program volunteers who make this program a success, especially Veterans Leather Program Chair Dennis McAleese, and Vice-Chair Chuck Mudge.

Are you interested in participating in the Veterans Leather Program? Visit elks.org/vets to learn more!



GRAND LODGE

MVS SCHOLARSHIP

MVS scholars virtually meet face-to-face

This year's Top 20 Most Valuable Student finalists came together virtually for the first time on April 24.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MVS Leadership Weekend looked different this year. Instead of gathering in Chicago to share their stories and interview for the top six awards, the new Elks scholars gathered on video chat. The socially distanced atmosphere couldn't stop the scholars from connecting with one another and forming new friendships with their Elks family.

After bonding with their #ElksFamily on Friday evening, the scholars met Saturday morning to virtually interview with a panel of three national judges for the top awards of \$30,000, \$40,000, and \$50,000.

The virtual programming continued after the interviews when the scholars met for Elks trivia, a final reflection of the weekend, and an optional game night hosted by 2003 MVS top winner Sean Loosli and 2015 MVS top winner Mark Ansell.

"This weekend was reaffirming that I'll be able to rely on the Elks family for a long time," said Santiago Alvillar, sponsored by Montebello, CA Lodge No. 2051. "If [meeting] was this amazing through this virtual weekend, imagine how amazing it would have been if we were to meet in person."

We're pleased to announce the 2020 Top Winners.

In third place, Madison Johnson, sponsored by Selbyville, DE Lodge No. 2173, and Tanner Christensen, sponsored by Provo, UT Lodge No. 849, will each receive \$30,000 toward their college education.

In second place, Irissa Machetta, sponsored by Clear Lake (Kemah), TX Lodge No. 2322, and Daniel Ardity, sponsored by Pompano Beach, FL Lodge No. 1898, will each receive \$40,000.

And in first place, the recipients of \$50,000 scholarships are Sarah Harper, sponsored by Athens, TN Lodge No. 1927, and Santiago Alvillar, sponsored by Montebello, CA Lodge No. 2051.

To learn more about the MVS scholarship, visit enf.elks.org/MVS.

STATE NEWS

AMERICANISM

Flag Day and 4th of July: Ponder what it means

By: **Jeremy Smolka**
MEA State Chair

As we have slowly started to re-open our State, I hope all my fellow Elks are well! Hopefully, the allowance of up to 100 people gathering in a group outdoors (social distancing where it applies) made it easier for all Lodges to perform their mandatory Flag Day ceremonies.

In 1907 Grand Lodge designated by resolution June 14th as Flag Day. In 1949 President Truman, an Elks member himself, made the proclamation that, thereafter, June 14th would be a day of National observance for the symbol of our Country. This is our chance each

year to show our respect for our Nation's Flag and what it stands for.

I'm quite sure this year's Flag Day will be one of the more memorable ones throughout the years. Not only due to Covid-19, but because of the civil unrest that has swept across our Nation. There have been peaceful protests, riots, looting, and violence.

I don't think Flag Day could have come at a better time. Hopefully, we all take some time to ponder what our Flag and Country mean to us and, in doing so, we will walk away with a great sense of pride and admiration. I hope Flag Day touches a nerve across the Country and brings us all closer together than ever

before.

Typically, we would be looking forward to parades and 4th of July celebrations. These will all be different this year, if they even happen at all.

I am hopeful that our Lodges will be able to participate in the National American Essay and State American Coloring Contest in the Fall. These provide an excellent opportunity for Elks to interact with school aged children across the State. Let's do our best to make these interactions positive ones.

I hope to see you at Fall Convention in Kalamazoo! Veterans, thank you for your service! Be proud to be an American! God Bless!

STATE TRUSTEE NEWS

Positive additions to the board

By **Michael Bartolotta**
State Trustee Chairman

The Trustees have pretty much been overhauled in the last few years.

We have made some really good additions to the board.

First Kenny Hines out of the Southeast District #4400 along with David Cashbaugh out of the Northwest district #4320, and now I would like to welcome Bob Antilla out of the Upper Peninsula #4280. But we do still have two exceptionally good long-term members to guide us newbies. Anthony Bosco out of the Northeast District #4240 and Terry Greer out of the Southwest District #4400. Every one of these gentlemen bring something special to the table and for that I am profoundly grateful. This team would not be complete without two incredibly special individuals State Secretary, Karen Cary and State Treasurer, PSP Keith Alverson. I want to thank all of you for all your efforts and most of all putting up with me. Congratulate to Dave Sladek for serving his term out on the board and now moving on to serve as 2vp of the MEA. Dave you will be missed.

The Trustees have undergone a great deal of change in the last few years not all the changes came without resistance in one form or another. However, to grow we must change how we think and how we go to market. Some might think the Trustees only work three times a year at conventions. Well let me give you a little insight the Trustees are in constant contact with one another we meet once a month via zoom sometimes twice a month. This exercise keeps the Secretary busy taking notes. But the closer the team, the better the results, and any Trustee should be able to answer any question that arises. The goal is transparency. We also keep in contact with group texting when a computer

is not available communication is the key. These changes were in effect before the pandemic hit so that did not slow this team down. Google Doc's have helped identify committees in trouble with their budgets and helped us identify committees not living up to expectations.

We can now drill down on a question with a stipend or warrant with a click of a button. We are well organized and better prepared, and this will lead to more proficient meetings. IE: Convention business meetings are no longer eight or ten hours those meetings now conclude in half the time.

Remember the Trustees are here to serve you, the MEA. When the pandemic hit, we started brainstorming how to help the Lodges communicate and continue holding Lodge meetings. We had much discussion with then State President, Chuck Oatten, and our State Sponsor, Ron Hicks and SDGER, James Deamud. That is how zoom came about for the entire State. Not a single person was opposed to the idea, so we rolled that program out to all of you. Even though it puts more load on the board we think that the program worked well. Lodges are reopening, the Trustees are going to continue to pay for zoom and keep it available for all the Lodges. Our hope it will help the way we all conduct business in the future.

Inclosing anyone who receives a stipend or a budget from the state if you have questions regarding either of those please feel free to reach out anytime. We can solve just about any issue with a simple phone call or email. We are easy to deal with.

I leave you with this quote by Thich Nhat Hanh.

People deal too much with the negative, with what is wrong. Why not try and see positive things, to just touch those things and make them bloom?

LODGE ACTIVITIES

Prepare now for awards

By **Rich Evans**
MEA State Chairman

Greetings to all, I would like to start by introducing myself, I am Rich Evans from Warren Sterling Heights Lodge #2292 and I look forward to serving the MEA as your Lodge Activities/Star Lodge Award Program State Chairman.

It is important that you prepare now for the 2020-2021 awards, the Lodge Activity / Star Lodge Program form can be found on the mielks.org website and I encourage the Exalted Ruler or Lodge Secretary to print it A.S.A.P and keep track of the events you may have already done and to continue working on it throughout the year, so when the time to submit the information in March 2021 you will already have it completed. Thank you and if you have any questions feel free to contact me at Lodgeactivities@mielks.org

LODGE NEWS

FERNDALE ELK LODGE #1588

Members of Ferndale lodge put on unique parade during pandemic

By Jennifer Ann Wilson
Courtesy of WXYZ

Bringing joy and smiles everywhere they go, a group in Oakland County has gone viral with the unique surprise pop-up parade started just last week.

The Ferndale Elks Club usually helps the community by offering scholarships and other programs. In the midst of this pandemic, they've found a new way to connect with each other and the community.

When you happen to see a T-Rex walking by your door.

"This is crazy," says Zack Rummery.

Then you look again! And see a unicorn, a shark, a penguin, a bear, rhinoceroses the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man and much more!

"They actually told me, 'come outside, there's a commotion! They're back,'" says Carolyn Bleibtrey, laughing.

"We're a secret walking club that pops up on occasion if the weather permits," says Sarah Ignash.

It's not so secret anymore! The wearers of these inflatable costumes walking up and down Ferndale's

residential streets, all happen to be members of the Ferndale Elks Club.

Today the organizer of this pop-up parade is revealed.

"I'm the pink unicorn," says Ignash laughing.

She says she was given the inflatable Pink Unicorn costume as a gift for Christmas to compliment the T-Rex costume she already owned. Now her fun hobby has started a movement!

"It brings us great joy! It brings smiles to our faces," says Bleibtrey.

"The kids in the neighborhood, they freak out, they run out of the houses to their yards to see us," says Ignash.

Where ever the pop-up costume parade goes, you'll see many people taking pictures and videos on their phones.

"Yeah! Oh yeah! I sent it to all our friends just to make them smile," says Bleibtrey, still laughing.

Ignash was inspired to bring magic to others, because at the moment, she needs some magic herself.

"I laid off 13 people and that weighs so heavily on me, it keeps me up at night," says Ignash.

She owns All American Pet Resorts

Lakeshore in Roseville which temporarily closed in March.

"This is the lighthearted thing to do to balance the crippling anxiety," says Ignash. "Seeing as the paycheck protection program is already drained of its funds and our application has not even been looked at."

Uncertainty over the future of finances and employment, those are concerns many people share, but for 30 to 40 minutes, those concerns disappear. This inflatable pop-up parade has grown from just a few people last week to a couple dozen today! Lifting the spirits of every person participating as much as those who happen to see them on an afternoon walk.

They don't announce their walks in advance to avoid encouraging group gatherings along their route, but if the sun is shining and winds are calm, there's a good chance they will be out walking bringing smiles everywhere they go.

"It's just so much fun! It's fun for us, it's fun others, it's really unexpected and that's part of the enjoyment of it," says Ignash.



Mayor signs proclamation

Port Huron Elks Lodge #343 2020 Youth Week Proclamation was signed by our Mayor, Pauline M. Repp, recognizing our involvement with our local Youth. Our Lodge and its Membership participate and support in many Youth Activities events through out the year, such as the Youth Antlers Program, Easter Egg Hunt, Junior Golf Camp, Pumpkin Patch, Children and Special Needs Christmas, just to name a few. We have also produced and posted many banners around our community and at our Lodge!



'Pumpkin Patch' party

Cadillac Elks Lodge #680 held a "Pumpkin Patch" costumed dinner celebration. The Elks used a Promise Grant to purchase costumes, gifts and dinner for 30 children, older siblings and parents for a great Pumpkin Patch event!"

LODGE NEWS

MUSKEGON ELKS LODGE #274

Community baby shower at Family Promise of the Lakeshore

Timing was excellent for Muskegon Elks Members as the Lodge scheduled and held a Community Baby shower in mid-February, beating the coronavirus state mandated shutdown of social activity by a mere 3 ½ weeks. Seven Members of Muskegon Lodge #274 donated their time and talent on Saturday February 15 from 1-4 PM to host a Community Baby Shower at Family Promise of the Lakeshore (FPL). Seven families (14 adults) and fifteen children attended the event which focused on gathering personal baby and toddler items and purchasing books for children as literacy was a major part of the initiative. The organization is managed by Executive Director Marian McDermed. Marian was so impressed by Muskegon Lodge's dedication to FPL that she filled out a membership application on the spot and has since been initiated as a Member of the Muskegon Lodge!

Funds from an ENF Spotlight Grant helped purchase baby diapers of all sizes newborn to 6 and contributions from Lodge Members increased the value of the contribution by 60%. The diapers were badly needed at FPL as this organization provides a safe haven and program for families in Muskegon and northern Ottawa Counties that are experiencing homelessness.

Funds were also used to purchase age appropriate books for the children. Elks volunteers read several books to each of the children in attendance. While families were attending the program our Lodge volunteers read age appropriate books to the children and gave each child three books to take with them and to keep as their own. Literacy improvement was a critical part of the program as the literacy level of children of homeless families is typically much lower than in families with a stable home environment and books are often not present in these families.

Our Lodge also prepared a meal for the families and the staff of FPL who attended the event. Families and children were thankful for the diapers, meal and books and thanked our Lodge many times for being there for them. A good time was had by all!



STATE NEWS

MEMBERSHIP

Many challenges to overcome

By Erik K. Buckstad

Membership and Retention Chair

My name is Erik K. Buckstad and I am so honored to have been appointed the State Membership and Retention Chair by our State President, Jerry Alexie for 2020-2021.

This year we have many challenges to overcome and lots of work to do getting our lodges up and open. My motto for this year is "MEMBERSHIP + CHARITY = LODGE PROSPERITY". This is because no lodge can be successful without membership or charitable endeavors. When you are doing charitable works, you inspire the members and the community and that drives membership, retention and expansion. All of our members are part of the membership and retention team!

I am aware each of our lodges are different face special challenges. One size does not fit all! I do know that we need our existing members and to expand our ranks as Elks, so that the great work that we Elks do can continue and prosper.

One area that really needs to be explored is technology. Meaning offering online payments, electronic dues notices and expanding your electronic footprint as opposed to snail mail and waiting for someone to visit our lodge. Your Membership and Retention Chairs, Secretaries, Boards and members can work together getting their lodges to utilizing all aspects of communication to reach the members, promote the Elks and collect dues.

Membership Recruitment Ideas

1) Announce to the community you are back open or report on charitable works and that you are seeking members. Put up a sign outside your lodge or do a press release to the local city government or newspaper.

2) New social distancing activities for your lodge members and the community. Parking lot events or drive up dinner events, like steak dinner pick up with proceeds to charity. (This was just done in Newport California)

3) Food drive or blood drive promoted thru face book, and local government or fire/ police departments.

4) PR, PR, PR.... = new interested people which then = possible new members. Use all types of communication.

5) Have members use the online application link to invite prospects to fill out an application. Remind members that getting 3 prospects to join gets them a

GER pin. Every member knows someone who would make a great new Elk member. This recruitment tool is free and the resource is all of the members of your lodge. Have a friendly competition each month to recruit new members where the winner gets a prize. Also, do a drawing for a prize from all members that got an application submitted.

Retention Ideas

1) Never be afraid to ask for money! Keep asking and don't assume they check mail, email, voice mail often. Keep following up! Also, never be afraid to ask for money! See, keep asking.

2) Remind the members why they became an elk. The dues notice is not just a bill! Use this opportunity to show the member why it matters to pay their dues. Send friendly emails often with the dues notice. Each email can be different. Dues help with operating the lodge they also pay the district, state and national per capita. Show the members that paying dues helps with the charitable giving. The lodge is open and can host charitable events. Highlight accomplishments of your great members.

3) Time to update your website, Facebook, add some new electronic media. (twitter or the like)

4) Direct one on one communication is very effective in the collection dues. Use all methods to contact the members about dues after mailing the initial dues statement, like text, email, phone calls, Facebook.

5) Have the member's sponsor or references reach out to delinquent members as they have a personal connection.

6) Set up an online payments system for payment of dues.

These systems are not very expensive and are easy to use thru Square or other services. Just email member the link to pay.

Allowing a member to click a link and enter a debit or credit card is quick and easy as opposed to the remembering to find the check book, write a check, find an envelope and buy a stamp.

I know this has not been a short article. It demonstrates that all lodges have obstacles to membership retention and development every year.

Our work is never done and even in this year of pandemic and social distancing Michigan Elks can all work together to get the great State of Michigan back in the positive and growing in membership.

SPECIAL EVENTS | ORGAN DONATION

Organ donation statistics updated June 2020

On Average, 95 transplants take place each day in the U.S. Even though 95% of Americans are in favor of being a donor, only 60% are registered organ, eye and tissue donors.

This discrepancy exacerbates the current organ shortage in America, which leads to 22 deaths per day.

Only 3 in 1,000 people die in a way that allows for organ donation.

It is estimated that if everyone was a registered organ donor, we would double the number of lives saved.

- The total number of transplants performed as of June 1, 2020- 15,003. The total # of donors January-May 2020 as of 6/10/2020 is 6,866. Total transplants in 2019: 39,719, an 8.7% increase from 2018. This included 7,397 living donor transplants — an all-time new record., and nearly 11,900 deceased donors — for a ninth consecutive record breaking year.

- 110,814 men, women and children await lifesaving organ transplants as of 6/11/2020. Of those, 69,377 people are active waiting list candidates.

- 58.3% of patients awaiting lifesaving transplants are minorities. Although donation and transplantation can take place successfully between individuals from different racial or ethnic groups, transplant success is often better when organs are matched between people of the same racial or ethnic background.

- Another person is added to the nation's organ transplant waiting list every 10 minutes.

- 101,558 patients waiting are in need of a kidney. The average waiting time for a kidney from a deceased donor 5 years.

A kidney from a living donor offers patients an alternative to years of dialysis and time on the national transplant waiting list.

- 12,674 patients waiting are in need of a liver. Living donation of part of the liver is an option for these patients; the remaining portion will regenerate and regain full function. Average median wait time to transplant —11 months. Partial lung, intestine and pancreas living donation are possible as well.

- While the majority of deceased organ donors are younger than age 50, more than 33% are age 50 or older and more than 5% are age 65 or older.

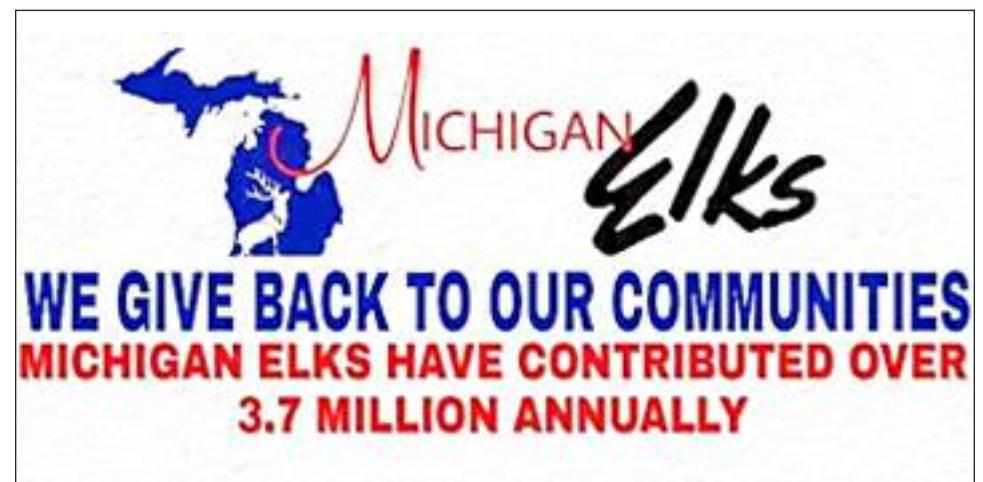
- Each year, there are approximately 30,000 tissue donors and more than 1 million tissue transplants; the surgical need for donated tissue is steadily rising. A single tissue donor can help more than 75 people.

- 48,000 patients have their sight restored through corneal transplants each year.

- More than 6,200 candidates died in 2018 while on the wait list, or within 30 days of leaving the list for personal or medical reasons, without receiving an organ transplant. That's an average of 17 patients every day.

Sadly, 8,000 people die each year on average — because the organs they need are not donated in time.

The solution to his health crisis is to continue educating the public about the lifesaving effects of donation and transplantation and to encourage them to register their decision at <http://donatelife.net/>



STATE NEWS

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

What challenges will our youth face?

By Diana Armstrong

Youth Activities Chair

These times sure have been different for all of us and I know that we still do not know what the future holds.

What is going to happen to our Youth when schools open in the fall? How many changes are the kids going to face? Social isolation has caused a lot of anxiety in children and we expect to see an increase in mental health issues.

As adults we need to stop and look around and notice the kids in our lives and in our Lodges. Currently there are many Lodges that cannot even allow kids into the Lodges. Events have been canceled and there is a lot of disappointment. All the kids have experienced their parents becoming teachers and have had their lives disrupted. We as adults need to pay attention to our kids and try to recognize what is happening in their worlds. I know that my grandchildren have had an extremely hard time trying to understand what is happening. Why can't they see their friends, why are people dying? Why do they have to stay home all the time? What is going to change when they go back to school in the fall? There are many questions and even now, some of us cannot answer their questions, but we need to stop and pay attention and help the kids to get through these difficult times. Make sure that you are talking to the kids about what is going on in the world and how they can do their part to help those in need.

So many of our Elk events and activities have had to be canceled due to the Corona Virus, and it is up to us to help the Youth try and understand why this is happening. We need to know how we can help those kids who need help. Some of them do not have food to eat. In some cases, both parents have lost their income and they have had no help. Consider assisting the kids to help others by doing a fund raiser to help those in need. Let the kids feel a part of the solution rather than disappointment. If we help them to help others, we are teaching good values to the Youth of today. Maybe some of us adults can learn from those guidelines.

And always remember that the Youth of Today are the Elks of Tomorrow.

Please let me know if you need help in setting up a fund raiser or applying for a Grant to assist those who are in need because of the Pandemic.

Message from the State Sponsor

By Ronald L. Hicks

State Sponsor

I share your disappointment at the cancellation of the MEA Spring Convention, and now, the cancellation of the Grand Lodge Convention in Baltimore. Like you, I was looking forward to another great visit with our Michigan friends, sharing good news, recognizing achievements, gaining knowledge, and enjoying our time together. Unfortunately, these are difficult times that require difficult decisions, flexibility, and sacrifice by us all.

As a proud State Sponsor, I enjoy working with so many dedicated Michigan Elks and continue to be impressed by the support for the State Major Project and Gold Key, as well as the many programs for our Youth and Veterans, along with the support for the Elks National Foundation and use of the ENF Community Investment Grants. This support and service helps prove that the Michigan Elks are a reliable partner for the Communities we serve, and makes all Michigan Elks very proud!

This has been a challenging year for our Lodges, Districts and State Leaders. First, with the transition to the new Financial Reporting System, and now with the unprecedented Coronavirus crisis. Both will change how we conduct business

forever. The FRS will make the reporting of Lodge financials much easier, save annual costs, and make better financial information readily available to the Lodges. The Coronavirus, with its major disruption to operations at all levels, has brought new ideas and resources into play that will undoubtedly change the way we are able to operate in the future.

I congratulate Chuck and Deb Oatten on an excellent year as your State President and First Lady, and offer thanks to the State/District Officers, Grand Lodge representatives and District Deputies for promoting the programs that matter most to all of us, for their assistance and guidance to the Lodges, and for keeping me fully informed on happenings throughout the state.

I offer my very best to incoming State President Jerry Alexie and First Lady, Stephanie, and to all incoming State Officers, who, of necessity, will be Installed by videoconference on May 16th. I know they are ready, willing and able to lead the Michigan Elks and will "hit the road running" immediately after their Installation.

While they are denied the usual recognition and celebration of their elections in May, the cancellation of our Spring Convention will make our October Convention even more special.

This is an extraordinary time, a special

time for reflection, determination and change. The Elks were founded on the idea of helping others and being a leader in our communities. We have always shined our brightest in times of crisis, and there has rarely been a time of greater need to help each other than now.

To assist in that effort, ENF has revised its CIP Grants, lessening restrictions, increasing amounts and providing \$14.3M to make it easier for our Lodges to serve the needs of their communities.

The Gratitude Grant is available now, and its \$3.7M can be used for an immediate contribution or donation to an organization that is on the front line fighting the Coronavirus Pandemic. All other Grants will be available on June 1st. Take advantage of this "free" money and let your bright light shine!

As things continue to change, and hopefully improve, please stay calm, remain vigilant and be aware of all that is going on around you.

In all matters, use your best judgment and common sense, with the health and safety of your Members and Community in mind. Together we will get through these tough times and the Michigan Elks Association and all Lodges will be even stronger because of the experience.

In the meantime, even though we are socially distanced, I know we remain fraternally connected!

GOLD KEY

Unfortunate cancellation of golf tournaments

By Geno Grabinski

Southeast District Gold Key Commissioner

The Michigan Elks Charitable Grant Fund, better known as the Gold Key, would like to thank the membership, Lodges and Districts for all the contributions we received in 2019-20. The Gold Key Commissioners and our State President, Jerry Alexie, look forward to continuing the great work that this program has accomplished in years past.

Your Gold Key Commissioners are Myself Geno Grabinski (Livonia Lodge #2246) from the Southeast District, Don Smith (Battle Creek #131) Southwest District, Mike Bowman (Tawas Area Lodge #2525) Northeast District, Diana Armstrong (Pontiac-Waterford Lodge #810) Metro District, Mike Ilmonen (Negaunee Lodge #1116) U.P. District and

Joan Rowland from (Traverse City Lodge #323) Northwest District. The six of us will work together with Executive Director PSP Kevin Quinn (Grand Rapids Lodge #48) to help further the good works of the Michigan Elks Charitable Grant Fund.

Unfortunately the District Gold Key Golf Committees and Gold Key Commissioners have decided to cancel our 6 district golf outings this year due to the many unknowns and limitations as well as the stress on local businesses that we rely on for sponsorship of these outings. This decision was not easy but we all felt it was the right thing to do. We have tossed around the idea of holding a Statewide Gold Key Golf Outing on the Thursday before the Fall Convention in Kalamazoo. We will let everyone know if this is going to happen.

We are in the process of setting up a Gun Raffle which would be drawn at the Fall Convention President's Dinner in Kalamazoo.

Don't forget you can still support the Michigan Elks Charitable Grant Fund by joining our Gold Key Donor program, just go to the State Website under Michigan Elks Charitable Grant Fund for details or checkout the back of our informational Tri-Folds.

Also, lodges don't forget to contact your local high schools and make sure they know about the Gold Key Scholarships and how they can easily go online and fill out the application. If your lodge needs Tri-Folds, Credit Unions or Placemats please contact your District Commissioner and they will have them sent to your lodge. We shall have more great news for you in the next edition and those to follow.

STATE NEWS

VETERANS COMMITTEE

Importance of Volunteer of the Year program

By Robin Bailey
State Coordinator

It is a new year and boy did it start with a bang. With the present events (mainly COVID-19) and other issues, it will be challenging to do our job of helping vets this year, but we can do it.

As things open up from the pandemic, the continued support you do through dinners, activities, luncheons, and seasonal parties that you plan, just know that these events are something that the veterans will definitely rely on, cherish and enjoy.

Now for an important issue to work on this year. The Elks Veterans Service has an Elk Veteran Volunteer of the Year award program and I am sure that there are deserving elk members in your lodges. We only had one for each of the previous few years and I would like to see more this round. The form/requirements are on the Grand Lodge website under the veteran's service programs section. Use them for nominating a worthy member from your lodge (does not need to be done on the lodge floor, but it is good if you do). Deadline for submission to me is Jan 31, 2020.

If you are planning veteran's events, please contact me (via email) with the event information, Elk member participation, where the event will be, projected Veteran involvement and monetary requests. Thanks for what you do for our veterans.

Officer training now independent committee

Officer Training is now an independent committee, it is chaired by the IVP and made up of members from thru out the state with various leadership backgrounds.

An Officer Training session was held at the Houghton Lake Lodge in February that produced great response and conversation. This committee is taking that basic outline and tweaking it to fit individual Lodge needs.

Please reach out to us with questions or to schedule a session.

We would like to meet with multiple Lodges at each session, please include all Lodge officers and committee chairs as your attendees.

MAJOR PROJECT

Pandemic forces difficult decisions

By Lori Jackson
Major Project Chairman

Michigan Elks, 2020 has started off with a bang! We missed seeing all our fellow Elks at the Soo. The Major Project has been extremely busy throughout COVID-19.

Unfortunately, as our new year began, the camps we support all had to make some difficult decisions. The pandemic certainly created lots of issues for the many camps and the children we help to be able to attend each summer. Sadly, many camps had to make the difficult decision to close out of caution for the children. As a Commission, we recognize the impact this will make for the children, and now, more than ever, we are staying in contact with the camps and offering assistance to the ones that have opted for a "virtual" camp. Our other focus this year will of course be the CASES. With the lodges being closed, it has presented some difficulties completing the Request for Assistance, but we were able to provide the help where it was and is needed. An example is an iPad with communication software/app that will help a 10-year-old boy with Down Syndrome, moderate cognitive Impairment, and severe speech and language impairment.



Another case was to help a family of a 7-year-old boy with eye-patches who was born with several congenital birth defects. He needs daily eye patches to help strengthen his eye. Insurance doesn't cover this, but the Elks have committed to shipping these to him on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure he continues with the requirement! This small gift means the world to his success!

This year has certainly been bumpy so far, but we keep the children as our focus. Our lodges have remained faithful in sending in donations and we appreciate your never-ending support. Thank you. We are

gearing up for our Annual Fundraiser in September, Coins 4 Kids, and hope to surpass our goal of \$25,000 in one month! We look forward to the Fall Convention in Kalamazoo where we can reward all our hardworking and compassionate Elks for your dedication. Normally, we would have provided our Awards at the Spring Convention, but we look forward to celebrating you all in the Fall!

The Commission met for our required meetings via conference call and Zoom, and while it wasn't the same, the work of the Major Project Commission has not faltered.

The Annual Meeting and the Spring Business meeting took place, and we held our election of officers. We said our goodbye to past Chairman Bob Anttila who termed out and has moved on to a District Trustee. We will miss all of Bob's hard work and love for the kids, but he remains a dear and active supporter of the State Major Project! We also said our goodbye to NE Commissioner Elaine Helman-Boudreau. Elaine, thank you for all your hard work, you and your family will remain in our hearts and prayers as you move through some very difficult times.

The following Officers were elected by the Commission: State Major Project Chairman, Lori Jackson, PER, Hastings Elks Lodge 1965. Vice Chairman, John Truskowski, PER, Plymouth-Ann Arbor Lodge 325, Treasurer, Scot Burns, PER, St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Lodge 541, Secretary Gary Goodin, PER, Warren-Sterling Heights Lodge 2292. Recently appointed new Commissioners: NE District: Russ Holove, PER, Flint Lodge 222, UP District Commissioner, Wendi Thomas, Negaunee Lodge 1116. What a GREAT TEAM!!!

We look forward to working with all of you in the 2020-2021 Lodge year.

INFORMATION FOR FALL CONFERENCE

Please join Michigan Elks in a celebration of charitable accomplishments throughout Michigan. The Michigan Elks Fall Conference presents statewide reports and exhibits of charitable events held by Lodges in the past year. Don't miss this resource of information from Elks Members throughout the state.



Scheduled Events include; Committee Displays, Member Reception, Ladies Breakfast, Michigan Elks Business Session, PSP/Member Luncheon, Training Seminars, and Presidents Banquet.

For the safety of all attendees, and in compliance with Coronavirus Pandemic Government Executive Orders, plans are being made with social distancing and specified meeting and banquet occupancy directives.

Room and Banquet Forms will be available on the Michigan Elks Website the first week of August. Future MEA Conventions;

- Spring 2021 – May 20-23 – Kewadin Resort, Sault Ste Marie
- Fall 2021 – Oct 21-24 – Shanty Creek Resort, Bellaire
- Spring 2022 – May 19-22 – Kewadin Resort, Sault Ste Marie
- Fall 2022 – Oct 19-23 – Shanty Creek Resort, Bellaire
- Spring 2023 – May 18-21 – Kewadin Resort, Sault Ste Marie
- Fall 2023 – Oct. 18-22 – Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo

MEA Convention Committee:

Howard Diehl, PSP: diehlpsp@mielks.org
George Sermon, PSP: sermonpsp@mielks.org

STATE NEWS

Congratulations to state officers



New State President Jerry Alexie and his wife, Stephanie.



Congratulations to Jerry Alexie, our new Michigan State Elks President, Jim Rowland of Traverse City Lodge #323, First Vice President, and Dave Sladek, the new Second Vice President. We look forward to being able to congratulate all of you at the Fall Convention in Kalamazoo!



Congratulations to 2nd Vice President Dave Sladek and his wife, Pam, from Copper Country Lodge #404. Looking forward to a great year!



New Elks shirts available

Beginning the week of June 8th, we began our journey, delivering Michigan Elks shirts to various Elks Lodges.

This year, shirts are red, so you can wear them on Fridays!

If you have any questions please contact me at jalexie@comcast.net.

For those of you who have already ordered your shirt, we will contact you so we can meet for delivery.

If you have not yet purchased your shirt, you will want to do so before June 8 to avoid paying the additional \$7.50 shipping charge.

If you would like to order a Michigan Elks shirt, please fill out the order form and send a check or PayPal is available.

Check out this link to get your shirt today: <https://mielks.org/.../24/2020-mi-elks-shirts-now-available/>

Elks Care - *Elks* Share

LODGE NEWS



Lodge uses grant to provide slow-cookers

Traverse City Lodge #323 used its Spotlight on Veterans Grant to partner with Blain's Farm and Fleet and Oleson's Food Stores. The generosity of these partners allowed the Lodge to provide 40 slow cookers, recipes and \$30 grocery gift certificates for area veterans in need. Lady Elks provided recipes for economical, easy to make slow cooker meals. These gifts will be distributed through The Northwest Michigan Food Coalition and Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency.



Flag Day observance

Cadillac Lodge 680 continued the Elks tradition of Flag Day celebrations with its display of historical flags which have served the United States and with Lecturing Knight, Lisa Martek, singing of all four stanzas of the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The ceremony was conducted at Cadillac Pavilion on the shore of Lake Cadillac and was attended by the public.



Flag Day ceremony

The Big Rapids Elks Lodge 974 partnered with local DAV #18 and Boy Scout Troop 114 to hold its annual Flag Day Ceremony on Sunday June 14th, 2020. Included in the ceremony was the history of the US flag, what it



Contribution to health camp

Leading Knight Richard Gauthier and 2019 Exalted Ruler Rodney Woodring on behalf of Traverse City Elks Lodge #323 present a check for \$4,253 to Clare Lutgen the executive director of Bay Cliff Health Camp. This money was raised as a result of our annual Chili Cookoff in the effort to contribute to the Bay Cliff Health Camp's Adopt a Door Program. Bay Cliff Health Camp is a therapy and wellness center serving the needs of individuals living with disabilities.